

## **Approved Minutes**

### **Assistive Technology Advisory Council Meeting September 15, 2011**

**Members Present:** Elizabeth Flaherty, Chair; Matthew Deans, Vice Chair; Michael Behrmann, Ed.D.; Clayton Bowen; Tony Gentry, Ph.D., OTR/L; Kelly Lum, OTR/L; William Massey; Joseph Wallace, Ph.D.; Joann Willis

**Member Present by Telephone Conference:** Melanie Brunson, Esq.

**Members Absent:** Margaret Fields, Ph.D; John Eisenberg; George Scott Higdon; Shawn Utt; Brenda Wickard, Tom Dowling

#### **Guests:**

Mary Wilds, Virginia Department of Education, Representing John Eisenberg on Council  
James Rothrock, Commissioner, Department of Rehabilitative Services (DRS)  
Polly Sweeney, Confidential Assistant, Policy/Administration, DRS  
Patricia Banks, Virginia Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (VDDHH)  
Marta Cagle, VDDHH  
Barbara Seymour, Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services  
Melissa Oliver, McGuire VA Medical Center

#### **Staff Present:**

Kathy Hayfield, Director, Field Rehabilitation Services, DRS  
Robert Krollman, Virginia Assistive Technology System (VATS) Central Office  
Barclay Shepard, VATS Central Office  
Elin Glass, VATS Central Office  
Emily Fallings, VATS North Regional Site - George Mason University (GMU)  
Alisa Louther, GMU  
Joann Ervin, VATS Southeast Regional Site - Old Dominion University (ODU)  
David Netherton, ODU  
Steve Ervin, ODU  
Robert Barrow, VATS Southwest Regional Site - VA Tech  
Andrea Sharp, VA Tech  
Sonja Schaible, Executive Director, Foundation for Rehabilitation Equipment and Endowment (FREE)

#### **Call to Order:**

Elizabeth Flaherty, Chair, called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone. All members of the Advisory Council, VATS staff and guests introduced themselves.

#### **Introduction of New Members:**

No new members at this time.

#### **Approval of June 9, 2011, draft Minutes:**

*Elizabeth Flaherty asked if there were any corrections to the draft minutes of the last meeting. The 6/9/11 ATAC Meeting Minutes, as is, stand approved.*

**Public Comment:** No public comments were offered.

**Old Business:** No old Business was brought forward

**New Business:**

**Report on AT Training and AATT Grant:**

Robert Krollman reported that the DRS Assistive Technology (AT) Trainings are being modified. VATS staff is leading a curriculum review process that should insure that subsequent trainings offer current correct and relevant information on assistive technology to agency staff and select community partners. Past trainings were well received and future trainings will also feature hand-held technology and a renewed focus on employment outcomes.

The Virginia Department of Rehabilitative Services is one of five states that received approval as a host site for the Agricultural Assistive Technology Training (AATT) Project sponsored by NIDRR. This grant will sponsor a one and one half day workshop designed to provide VR professionals with an increased cultural competency and preparedness to improve employment outcomes for farmers and agricultural workers with disabilities to further the agricultural worker's current work status in a safe, effective and productive manner. Two training are planned for 2012 and three in 2013. A training date for Virginia is pending. Council members are invited to attend these trainings.

VATS, with Stand Up, Inc., in Lynchburg, an employment service organization, will test the effectiveness of hand-held technology in the workplace for consumers with mental health disabilities.

VATS staff is facilitating a face-to-face meeting on September 30, 2011, at Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center with the Rehabilitation Technology Services staff and select agency staff to discuss service delivery and to develop collaborative programming.

VATS staff is leading a review of Agency Assistive Technology initiatives and developing a comprehensive approach to the provision of AT training for agency staff and community partners by April 2012.

**Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center (WWRC) AT Update:**

Kelly Lum provided an update of WWRC activities. The therapy department is working with autism clients through the Autism Speaks grant. They have been doing evaluations, recommendations, and providing the use of technology. This grant will continue through the end of the current calendar year.

**AT Reuse and Emergency Management Summit:**

VATS staff is coordinating a Virginia delegation to attend the FEMA Region III AT Reuse and Emergency Management Summit, September 26-27, 2011, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The group will be looking at durable medical equipment reuse and disaster planning, response and mitigation on a statewide level.

### **AT Director's Update:**

Kathy Hayfield, Director, Field Rehabilitation Services and Support Team, provided an agency update. DRS is looking at consolidating with other agencies; DRS, the Department of Aging and the adult unit of the Department of Social Services (DSS). This would change DSS to serve children. This consolidation will need to go through the General Assembly process.

Focus on training next year will be on aging and employment and the use of assistive technology to improve outcomes. DRS is still serving 18,000 clients even though Vocational Rehabilitation funds have been reduced and the Agency is requesting additional funding through the Disability Commission. .

Ms Hayfield stated the need for people to be seen and speak out at the General Assembly to support the Department of Education on "AT follows the Student" which would allow AT equipment to be purchased by family and/or other organizations when students exit the school system.

### **New Well Fund:**

Joseph Wallace, Ph.D., provided an update on the New Well Fund (NWF). The NWF is pursuing the reestablishment of the Consumer Service Fund. *A motion was made by Dr. Behrmann to provide the NWF with a support letter from the Council to establish the Consumer Service Fund. The motion was seconded by Kelly Lum and passed by unanimous vote.*

The NWF has a \$50,000 grant from the Richmond Eye & Ear Foundation Fund to provide funding for people in the Richmond and surrounding area who are affected by hearing and vision loss. The NWF has not received any applications due to the possibility that applicants are being served by other funding sources as they move through the application process. Council members offered some suggestions as to additional areas of collaboration that could be explored.

Last year the NWF approved 120 loans for people with disabilities out of 250 applications received.

### **VATS Regional Site at GMU:**

Michael Behrmann, Ed.D., provided an update on activities. The TechKnowledge Conference sponsored by the Virginia Department of Education was cancelled; however, it will be available through TTAC On line with registration, evaluation forms and continuing education credits available online. The material will also be archived and participants can get recertification certificates.

The Catalyst Program and upcoming webinars were discussed. The Virtual Collaboration Center is being used for video and audio conferencing due to a reduction in travel funds. GMU also has an AT Library with samples of AT, computers, etc.

**Commissioner's Update:**

James A. Rothrock, Commissioner, DRS, discussed the current status of the Vocational Rehabilitation Program in regards to the order of selection. Commissioner Rothrock reported that a delegation from Virginia will be participating in the FEMA Region III Summit in Philadelphia this month.

The Commissioner asked the group to forward to him any stories or incidents where a person with a disability was compromised as a result of any recent natural disasters. Commissioner Rothrock will report any finding to the Virginia Department of Emergency Management.

Secretary Hazel, DHHR, made a recommendation to create a new agency comprised of DRS, the Department of Aging, and adult unit of the Department of Social Services.

A new website (Virginia's Blueprint for Livable Communities, [www.vadrs.org/vblc](http://www.vadrs.org/vblc)) is available which will list resources for people to use in developing "livable communities" in Virginia. It will list promising and best practices and offer several programmatic models.

**AT Presentation: Virginia Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (VDDHH)**

Patricia Banks and Marta Cable, Outreach Specialists, VDDHH, provided a demonstration of various types of AT equipment used for hard of hearing individuals.

**Foundation for Rehabilitation Equipment and Endowment (FREE Foundation)**

Sonja Schaible, Executive Director, FREE Foundation, provided an update on their chapters in Virginia. The FREE Foundation is part of the Virginia Reuse Network (VRN). The VRN is administered by VATS. FREE and the VRN are seeking state funding to continue the FREE Foundation program. *A motion was made by Dr. Wallace to provide a letter from the Council to support the Foundation for Rehabilitation for Equipment and Endowment's efforts in getting funding from the Governor's Office and the General Assembly to support reuse programs statewide. The motion was seconded by Matthew Deans and passed by unanimous vote.*

**VATS Regional Sites:**

All three of VATS Regional sites reported on regional site activities that took place in the preceding quarter.

**Next ATAC Meeting:**

The next ATAC Meeting is scheduled for **Thursday, January 12, 2012**, 10:00am-2:30pm at the DRS Central Office in Richmond, VA. VATS will supply a funding update and this will be a planning meeting and will develop ad hoc task committees to facilitate development of goals that will direct future VATS activities..

**Adjournment:**

*A motion was made by Ms. Flaherty to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Dr. Wallace and unanimously approved.* The meeting adjourned at 2: 15pm.